

# fact sheet

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## Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act

### Issue: Commercial Fish Permits

**Overview:** Effective fisheries management requires complete and up-to-date information on eligible participants. Traditionally, this authority has been vested regionally with the states and the Regional Fishery Management Councils (Councils), but there is growing recognition of the need for national coordination of commercial fish permitting systems and the data they provide. The 1996 Sustainable Fisheries Act amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) required the Secretary of Commerce to make recommendations for implementing a Standardized Fishing Vessel Registration and Information Management System. Those recommendations were provided in 1998, and over the past several years, additional studies have called for a nationally coordinated commercial fishing license program.

**Proposal:** The Administration's MSA bill directs the Secretary to establish a uniform national program for permitting commercial fisheries. The MSA bill would also give the Secretary of Commerce the authority to collect identifier information from permit holders to help monitor fisheries.

**Purpose:** The Administration's MSA reauthorization proposal creates a national commercial fish permitting system. This authority will, when fully implemented, provide NOAA information needed to track participation in federally managed fisheries. It will improve the ability of the Councils and NOAA to monitor the activity of vessels fishing in multiple regions or fisheries. The program will facilitate the development and administration of limited entry and dedicated access privilege (DAP) programs, as well as capacity reduction programs, all of which require accurate information on historical and current participation in federally managed fisheries. A national commercial fish permitting system will provide an integrated body of information to support the fisheries law enforcement programs of NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard.